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CHANGES IN THE GALLERIES

THE changes in the arrangement of the various collections of the Museum, with a view to their more systematic organization and more effective display, are proceeding as rapidly as circumstances permit. The patience of visitors is no doubt tried at times by the number of galleries which they find closed, as well as by the disappearance of objects from places where they have been accustomed to find them; but the changes which have been undertaken are felt to be necessary for the improvement of the Museum as a whole, and it is hoped that whatever annoyance is experienced while they are progressing may be repaid by the results when they are completed. For the moment the activity in this work is centered chiefly in the galleries of the first floor, especially those of the Department of Classical Art and the Collection of Casts, and an account of what is being done here may be of interest to the readers of the Bulletin.

Gallery 8, the room at the left of the main staircase, in which the recent accessions of the Classical Department were exhibited until the end of April, is now to be devoted permanently to the Greek and Roman terra-cottas of the Museum, consisting principally of statuettes and lamps. The light here is far from perfect for such sensitive objects, but the room is on the whole the best that could be used for the purpose; and the substitution of a lighter color on the walls for the absorbent red with which they were formerly decorated, and the use of a light background in the cases, will probably do much to overcome this shortcoming. In this room will be gathered not only the terra-cottas acquired during the last two years, but also those formerly in the Museum, including a representative selection of specimens from the Cesnola collection, following the principle which was adopted last year in the arrangement of the Bronze Room, of bringing together in one place all the more interesting and instructive examples of a certain branch of art, from whatever source they were

obtained. A special feature of this room, which will doubtless prove attractive from more than one point of view, will be a collection of modern forgeries of Greek terra-cottas, exhibited as such for purposes of comparison with the genuine specimens in the same room. In a later number of the Bulletin a more detailed account of this room and its contents will be published, explaining the principle of arrangement which has been adopted, and calling attention to the more important objects in it for those who wish to make a study of the collection.

For a while Gallery 10, popularly known as the "Boscøreale Room" will necessarily be in a transitional stage. At present it must be used partially as an overflow space for some of the recent accessions of this department, until further changes in the galleries make it possible to provide permanent quarters for them among the objects to which they belong. Hence for some months indulgence must be asked for what will seem a rather incongruous assemblage of works of various periods and classes, and in the meantime preparations are being made for the better display of the Boscøreale frescoes, especially those of the *cubiculum* or bed-chamber, which are now set up as a room in the center of the gallery, where they are poorly lighted and ineffectively seen. For this *cubiculum* a special room is to be constructed during the summer, projecting into the open area which adjoins the present gallery, and connected with the gallery by a doorway as wide as the present opening into the chamber. In this new setting the frescoes will have ample top-light, a mosaic pavement, copied as accurately as possible from the original floor of the chamber, and a cornice and other details of harmonious character, the intention being to reproduce as nearly as may be the effect of the Pompeian rooms in the condition in which they are seen to-day. The construction of this room will serve a double purpose, for it will not only show the frescoes of the *cubiculum* to much better advantage, but will give more floor-space to Gallery 10 for the

exhibition of other objects of the classical collections.

Among the casts the first change that will be noticed is the assemblage of all the casts of ancient Persian Sculpture in Gallery 17, instead of their being divided between Galleries 17 and 20 as formerly. This change brings all the reproductions of Persian art into one place, and enables us to show those which were in Gallery 20 under much better conditions of space, if not of light, than before, particularly the colored casts of the large friezes from Susa, which were much cramped in the smaller room. It has also made it possible to devote Gallery 20 to the new collection illustrating prehistoric art in Greece. This collection, which excited unexpected popular interest when a portion of it was exhibited in the Room of Recent Accessions, consists of reproductions—and some originals—of objects found in Crete, Mykenae and other prehistoric sites, and may now be regarded as one of the special features of the Museum. It was fully described in the February Bulletin, and therefore need not be dwelt on here further than to say that it is still in an incipient stage, and will be enlarged as rapidly as the material is forthcoming.

The construction of the new wing of the Museum which is to contain the Hoentschel collection involves extensive changes in the cast collection, because it will be connected with the present building by the room in which the casts of the statues from the two pediments of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia have been exhibited. These casts, it will be remembered, represent both groups complete, as they are restored in Dresden, and since they would block the entrance to the main gallery of the new wing it has become necessary to provide another place for them. Advantage is being taken of this necessity to exhibit the sculptures in such a manner that they will be seen perhaps more effectively than in any other museum at the present time, which fortunately is possible owing to the great

height and wall area of the large Hall of Casts (No. 38). They are to be placed on the two end walls of this hall, where an appropriate frame is now being constructed for them, in exact imitation of the architecture of the two pediments of the temple, with all their mouldings, cornices, and other details. By a happy chance the hall is just wide enough to contain these, in the full size of the originals, and as the statues will be about thirty-four feet above the floor, architects and sculptors will have an exceptionally favorable opportunity of studying the principles of Greek pedimental composition when this installation is completed. A few other casts of a monumental character, such as the Nike of Samothrake, upon its prow, and the Horses of St. Mark's, will also be moved from the side galleries into this hall, and the many casts of architectural details of various periods in the alcoves surrounding the hall will be arranged in a more systematic manner than has hitherto been found possible. With these changes, and the redecoration of the hall in a quiet tone of gray, it will present a new, and as we hope, a greatly improved appearance. A new and more expansive arrangement of the entire collection of casts is much to be desired, but unfortunately the conditions of space and light in the galleries assigned to these do not permit it, and a thorough attempt at a reorganization of the collection must be deferred until some future addition to the building provides the proper quarters. Nevertheless certain changes of arrangement are being made in each of the cast-rooms, mainly for the purpose of making the sculptures in them conform as far as practicable with the system of division into periods and schools that has been adopted for the new Catalogue of the Collection of Casts, which is now in press, and will probably be ready for circulation by the time that the rearrangement of the collection itself shall have been completed.

E. R.